

MANITOULIN DISTRICT
HISTORY AND GENEALOGY

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The early years of the Manitoulin - Killarney area



Bess Pit Barron (left), Andy Tyson (seated in car) and Bess's friend on the right. Photo was taken at Tyson's George Lake homestead about fifty years ago.

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"THROUGH THE YEARS"

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A Chronology of certain events occurring in the Killarney District From Early Times

**Researched and compiled by
Bruce Pitfield**

Dr. Emerson Greenman, late archaeologist and anthropologist of the University of Michigan, spent seventeen summers in the Killarney area from 1939-1955 circa. Prior to his death in the early 1970s, Mr. Pitfield corresponded with him on several occasions and visited him in his Michigan home.

Dr. Greenman's research into the study of Early Man in the Killarney-Manitoulin District is explained briefly in these following pages according to interviews with, and letters from Dr. Greenman, by Mr. Pitfield.

Through the Years is pleased to be able to share the following information with its many subscribers and readers. We thank Mr. Pitfield for his continued in-depth history that he has been providing Through The Years' readers on a periodical basis since our first publication in 1983.

Letter to B. Pitfield July 24, 1971

I arrived in Killarney one Sunday in early July 1939, with five students of the University of Michigan, on a fishing boat rented from W.F. McRae of Gore Bay. I enquired of Father Vincent McHugh (parish priest of Killarney) about archaeological sites in the area and he referred me to Mrs. George Stephen of Toronto, who was staying at the Loosemore's (home).

(The Loosemore Family's early history in Killarney was printed in the TTY issue of December 1990.

Mrs. Stephen took us, in our boat, out to the farm of John de Lamorandiere and we saw at once that the lower field was an

archaeological site. We set up tents there and stayed, excavating until about August 30th, I was at that camp with students the next summer and each summer thereafter, for two months each, until the end of the summer of 1953. We called this site KB1. In 1939, we found another site at what is known as the Sand Hill on the road to George Lake, about 1800 feet toward Killarney from where the road crosses Chickanishing Creek. This site was called CH1.

In 1940, we found the site referred to as GL1, up across George Lake near Lumsden's camp.

Exploration

I should add that in the summer before arriving at Killarney we explored and excavated sites on Manitoulin Island from the east end to Meldrum Bay, by car and boat, the south shore as far west as Providence Bay, where a prehistoric site

was excavated. We also dug at Bell Rock on the east end of the Great Cloche Island, and spent several weeks excavating an early historic Indian cemetery, dated about 1770, at the north end of the Old Birch Island.



Dr. Greenman is seen in a relaxed mood aboard the steamer Manitoulin.

Students at Killarney

About 100 students took part in this work. They were from the Universities of Michigan, Toronto, New York, Columbia, Ohio State, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Harvard, New Mexico, Radcliffe College, Mount Holyoke College, and Oberlin College. They received their board, room, laundry and six hours of credit in the University of

Michigan. There were regular classes in techniques of excavation, geology of the region, osteology, and two examinations during the summer.

Mrs. Teddy de Lamorandiere, Senior, was cook most of the time. (Past issues of TTY have had stories on this family.)



A group of archaeology students sit around their cabin table at the KB1 site near Killarney in the 1940s.

Travel

During the 17 summers at Killarney we also made trips by boat, usually hiring John Skelliter's and Vincent Roque's boats, or the old Frisbie of Mr. Albert Lowe's (three old-time Killarney families). We travelled up and down the North Channel and North Shore of Georgian Bay from Spanish River to French River and on to Dead Island, finding sites and doing some small amount of excavation. We explored the shores of Trout Lake, Sturgeon Lake, Kakagise Lake, and Carlyle Lake, all by boat, and the area

on foot from George Lake to Mahazenazig Creek. We went twice to the extreme end of Three Narrows Lake where Bill Hotti's camp was located, and on up to Green Mountain Lake.

We went on to Horse Island (Fitzwilliam) from South Baymouth in a punt (small boat) and outboard as far as Club Island. We walked the south shore of Horse Island from Indian Harbour to Wild Bight. Two of the students walked the shore of Manitoulin Island from Wekwemonging

around to Thomas Bay, and we also explored by boat Badgeley, Center and Round Island.

I was given permission to do this work by Dr. Diamond Jenness and W.J. Wintemberg of the National Museum of Canada. They recommended that we go to Wikwemikong

first and talk to Joe Peltier, then about eighty years old, and we did so. We spent the first night at Buzwah, in an empty log cabin rented from its owner.

The students who took part in this work were both men and women.

Ancient Man In North America

By Bruce Pitfield

After I heard from Dr. Greenman about my hometown archaeological findings, I began to do more and more personal research on the Killarney vicinity.

As a result, one of the books I came across was *Ancient Man in North America* by H.M. Wormington. In it, the author notes that

Emerson Greenman and George M. Stanley have reported on two sites that lie on the north shore of Lake Huron near Killarney, Ontario (Greenman 1941; Greenman and Stanley 1943). These sites, named after George Island which lies nearby, were associated with beaches that lay well above the recent level of Lake

Huron, the other was 297 feet above it. Some of the artifacts were abraded. If they were battered and ground by wave action, as some geologists believe, they must have been present when a further rise in water level made it impossible for waves to beat against the sites (Greenman 1954). It is believed that, for these beaches to have been formed, the waters of Lake Huron must either have been tilted in such a way as to prevent drainage. The time of occupation of the higher site may fall within a period when ice sheets were still relatively close. The problem is to date this period. It is said to correlate with the Algonkian Lake stages which are probably more than 8000 years old.

Dr. Robert Bell's findings

By Bruce Pitfield

It was probably the late Pierre Regis de La morandiere who, in 1922 wrote this article.

"Shebaonaning, now Killarney, must have been a paradise and greatly frequented by the Indians centuries before the whites discovered the Georgian Bay (Mer Douce). In 1826, a large mound was chosen by Mr. Etienne Augustin de Lamorandiere the first settler of that village as a suitable place to build a maple sugar camp, a short distance from the water of the beautiful Killarney Bay.

On this mound stood, at that time, two very large trees, a white birch and a white pine. These were chopped down as level with the ground as possible and a sugar camp built on it then, which was used for many years. No one ever thought for a moment that this mound was the last sleeping place for four tall Indian warriors until Professor Bell, of Ottawa, bought the mound from Etienne's son, Charles de lamorandiere for \$16.00 (sixteen dollars). He employed the writer of this article and two

of his brothers to dig it, when it was discovered that four Indian warriors had been buried there no less than three hundred years before. Each warrior had his own hunting or fighting apparatuses consisting of several flint arrowheads of different size and shapes, two copper necklaces and each had a beautiful gray stone pipe. All these articles had been wrapped in beaver skin as there was still part of the skin and hair on them.

Further up the hill, two more mounds were dug, containing one body each, with flint arrowheads, copper necklace and stone pipe. On one of these mounds had stood a large white pine, which someone had chopped down about the year 1852 for barrel staves. The Professor managed to count 250 rings on the stump of this large white pine tree, and he said that this pine had not grown on the mound for fifty years after these warriors had been buried and gone to the happy hunting ground.

These warriors must have been about six feet tall...not a single decayed tooth was found in any of the six heads.

National Museum of Man

In a letter from Robert McGhee of the National Museum of Man's Archaeological Division, on July 5, 1971, Mr. Pitfield received this reply to a letter:

I have found a little information on the Killarney archaeological material which you recently asked about. In our collections there is a skull, mandible, and a few other pieces of human skeleton which were excavated by Dr. Robert Bell in 1878, apparently from a site about two miles north of Killarney. We have no notes or

other information on the find. The skeleton is not of 'huge stature', but appears to be a normal Indian skeleton. The skull is heavily stained with copper, and a large quantity of copper beads and a few other artifacts were apparently associated with the burial.

We also have a catalogue list of material excavated by Doctor Emerson Greenman. The site yielded a radiocarbon date of 80 B.C. (Before the birth of Christ) and is probably of the middle Woodland cultural period.



A part of Killarney Bay near the KB1 site in the 1940s.

Anthropology student of Dr. Greenman writes

In the winter of 1982, Elman Service wrote to Mr. Pitfield concerning the latter's request for information on the Killarney excavations. He writes:

"I was a student of Dr. Greenman's, along with Robert Benton (his assistant), Ted Guthe, (somebody) Jerome, and Ralph Patton in the summer of 1940. These latter two disappeared from anthropology.

Benton became a physical anthropologist and I don't know where he is. The Goggin you mention is John Goggin, who with Benton, was with Greenman in 1939 exploring Manitoulin Island, mainly. He died a few years ago.

In 1940, we five (6 with Doc) explored Manitoulin Island and around the Georgian Bay north Shore. We had a boat called The

Sonava Beach (Probably because of all the trouble they had with it! B.P.)

Then we found the rich Indian site in John de Lamorandiere's pasture. We set up a permanent camp there and went on exploring the vicinity. We had a dig near Chikanishing Creek near the bridge on the road to George Lake. Then one time two or three of us hiked across country from George Lake to Baie Fin. On the way, we ate lunch under a tree and I sat on a piece of limestone chert, pulled it away and noticed it had been chipped to make a hand-ax. And the stone was water-worn. We excitedly searched and found other artifacts and evidences (like clam shells) that we were on a beach of the ancient Great Lakes, but now several hundred feet above the level of

George Lake (which is itself well above the level of the present Lake Huron!)

So we established a dig there too, and this was the important one because of its great age, and the first that its age could be quite definitely established by geology (the retreat of Niagara Falls had been regular each year since the early Great Lakes) and provides a time measurement.

Over the winter we had John build us a cabin in his pasture and the next summer (1941) we set up a kind of summer school. The students went home eventually (to our relief) and Doc and I, Helen Stevenson (later, my wife) and Chuck Miller stayed a few weeks of gorgeous fall weather to build a fireplace in the cabin and concoct a few improvements.



Excavating at KB1 in 1940.



J.C. Reynolds

Collection

In another 1972 letter to Mr. Pitfield, Dr. Greenman stated:

Here are some maps you may be able to use. I made them myself eight or ten years ago. You don't need to return them. The picture of the Indian is that of Mokomanish of Wikwemikong in the middle 1800s. In 1938, I found a watercolor painting of this man in the J.C. Reynolds Collection in Manitowaning, brought it back to Ann Arbor, had it photographed, or rather photostated I guess, then returned it. The interesting thing is that it shows the old Ottawa (Odawah) way of doing the hair - making it stand up from the head by the application of grease.

Mokomanish of Manitowaning, a member of the Ottawa tribe showing the "raised hair". The photo comes from a water colour, made about 1840, and which was in the J.C. Reynold's Collection.

Students write about their involvement

In 1986, Jane Hawkins and Alma Anderson, both former students of Dr. Greenman when he was at Killarney, wrote to Mr. Pitfield with copious amounts of information. Following is a synopsis of that material:

We were fortunate in attending school when anthropology was a small department and we came to know our professors. We both worked in the museum and got to know our faculty well. Of course Doctor Greenman was a favourite, for the width and depth of his knowledge and humour and wry wit. When he found I couldn't

afford the \$40 tuition for the 1947 season, he hired me as 'official photographer' for the season. When I pointed out that I wasn't a photographer, he responded that anyone could take a picture of a trench face with a few artifacts embedded therein. He would teach me the finer points - and he did. I remember washing prints in Chikanishing Creek and the feel of scores of mosquitoes dining on my neck while my arms and hands were encased in a black box developing film.

I remember also the interest and kindness the townspeople showed the